

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

RECORD OF THE INDIAN ROOFED TURTLE  
*KACHUGA TECTA* (GRAY) FROM ESTUARINE ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Only a few highly specialised forms of reptiles can live for protracted period in regions of high salinity (Dunson 1979). Turtles of family Emydidae regularly reported from estuarine environments of Asia are the painted turtapin *Callagur borneoensis*, river terrapin *Batagur baska* and Burmese roofed turtle *Kachuga trivittata* (Pritchard 1979). A few typically freshwater species under this family have also been recorded periodically from such regions, throughout the world, permanent residents in saline areas being comparatively rare.

A single specimen of the Indian roofed turtle *Kachuga tecta* was captured by fishermen at Arbesi, in the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, and deposited at the Sajnekhali turtle hatchery. This is an addition to the chelonian fauna of the area and constitutes the first record of the species from estuarine environment.

Order CHELONIA

Suborder CRYPTODIRA

Family EMYDIDAE

Subfamily BATAGURINAE

Genus & Species *Kachuga tecta*

**Material :** 1 EX., 0, Dhajekhali, Arbesi Compartment 3, Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, South 24 Parganas District, West Bengal, India. 14 November, 1985.

**Measurement and Weight :** Carapace length 151 mm., carapace breadth 105 mm., plastron length 133 mm., shell height 72 mm., weigh 510 gms.

**Diagnosis :** Carapace elevated with a prominent vertebral keel which is produced into a spike at the posterior-end of the third vertebral scute, and continuing as a ridge on the fourth and fifth. Second vertebral scute longer than third, fourth is bottle-neck in contact with third. Posterior margin of carapace feebly serrated.

**Colouration :** Carapace chocolate brown with scattered small black patches. First three vertebral scutes with a horny brown keel, edged with black, becoming black on the fourth and fifth vertebral scutes. Pale yellow margin of carapace. Yellow-pink below, with upto